

**REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 16, 2011**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, May 16, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilor Kotkin

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Roberts led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**PROCLAMATIONS**

**TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD  
Planning and Economic Development Department  
MONTHLY REPORT  
May 2011**

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**RECENT PROJECTS**

- New Alliance Bank at 709 Silas Deane Highway has rebranded to **First Niagara Bank**.
- **Rugged Fitness** has opened at 1862 Berlin Turnpike (Atlas Tile Plaza).
- Building permits have been issued for a Chinese take out restaurant at 685 Silas Deane Highway – **Great Wall**. The space is next door to Verizon Wireless.
- A building permit has been filed by Young Pharmaceuticals for space at the rear of 2138 Berlin Turnpike.
- A building permit has been filed for office space at 50 Burbank Road – Buckeye Terminal.
- A building permit has been filed for interior renovations at Marshall's at 1130 Silas Deane Highway.
- A sign application has been filed to change the name of Catcher's Sports Bar to Blutto's Bar and Grill at 580 Silas Deane Highway.
- A PZC application has been filled for a small expansion and façade improvements to property located at 450 Silas Deane Highway owned by Lamore's. A Façade improvement Loan request is anticipated.

**OTHER NEWS AND INITIATIVES**

**Developer/Tenant Contacts**

- On Tuesday, April 5 representatives from presented revised conceptual plans under a pre-application review to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a reduced density multi family apartment complex for the property at 2180 Berlin Turnpike.
- The former Porter and Chester Institute 113-125 Silas Deane Highway was sold to an LLC based in Hartford . No specific plans have been submitted for the property at this time.

- Staff received notice of a pending application and are reviewing the plans for a residential development project proposed for land on the Town Line in Newington on Russell Road. The application was submitted by Toll Brothers, Inc and the proposal consists of a 71 lot open space subdivision on a series of 4 cul de sacs to be known as Newington Walk on property owned by the Balf Company. Additionally, an application has been filed to rezone commercial property with frontage on East Cedar Street abutting the above referenced property to a Residential 12 zoning classification in anticipation of a 75 unit townhouse condominium development. A public hearing with the Newington PZC is set for May 25.
- The PZC approved a request for an extension for the approval of plans for an 80 unit assisted living facility at 295 Ridge Road.

### **Redevelopment Agency**

- **1000 Silas Deane Highway** – Bartram and Cochran has prepared some preliminary concept plans for the redevelopment of this property and a draft redevelopment plan for staff review. The preliminary plans call for the demolition of the existing building and the replacement with a mixed use commercial development with some residential units on the upper levels. Plans are still being refined based upon feedback from staff and Agency members.

### **Economic Development and Improvement Commission**

- **Quarterly Available Property Report** – Staff have completed our quarterly survey/inventory of available property for lease and sale. This report is the only comprehensive listing of all available property in the community and will be posted on the Town's website for more widespread distribution.

### **Events**

- May 12, 2011 Wethersfield Country Club **45<sup>th</sup> Annual Chamber Awards Dinner and Annual Meeting**.
- June 2, 3 pm to 6 pm Wethersfield Farmers Market begins it's season at the Keeney Cultural Center of Main Street.
- May 21 the Wethersfield Historical Society will be hosting it's Annual Keeney Family Day.
- May 28 the Webb Deane Stevens Museum will be holding it's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Revolutionary War encampment.
- Comstock Ferre and Co. have announced plans for a June 5 celebration to celebrate the **200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of Comstock Ferre**. The event will include entertainment, educational displays, some food and some crafts.

### **Tourism**

- **ibrochure** - Working with Madden Media on the development of an electronic promotional brochure (ibrochure) which will be used as an alternative to our printed brochure in response to inquiries received from our upcoming ad in the CT Getaway Guide.
- **Stakeholders Meeting** – On April 12 a semi-annual meeting was held at the Keeney Center with interested stakeholders to share information and improve communications between organizations.
- Eleven (11) responses/bids were received for the **Wayfinding Signage** project. Town Council awarded the project to Sign Lite (low bidder) at their April 4, 2011 meeting. The bid responses were higher than our present budget will accommodate. It is envisioned that installation will occur over several phases.

**Meeting/Event Schedule May**

May 3	PZC 7 pm
May 4	Design Review 6:30 pm
May 4	Shops Local 8:30 am
May 5	Chamber of Commerce 8:30 am
May 12	EDIC 12 noon
May 12	Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting
May 17	PZC 7 pm
May 18	Design Review 6:30 pm
May 31	Tourism Commission 5:30 pm

Deputy Mayor Console asked if there was any information on the house located on Nott Street, across from Woodside Drive.

Peter Gillespie responded that this property is handled primarily by the Building Department. He had recently spoken with the owner of the building and the builder. A little bit of work is being done every so often in order to keep the permits active. He noted that Brian O'Connor would be the best person to speak to about this property.

Deputy Mayor Console inquired about the plans for the Toll Brothers' project on Russell Road and noted that he has received calls from residents on Schoolhouse Crossing.

Peter Gillespie responded that all the plans are available in the Engineering Department. He added that there are actually two projects, and only one of which is going through a grueling process right now. There is a 71 lot subdivision, and a second phase of townhouse multifamily development which there is a concept plan, but no specific plan going through the permit review process now.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if a traffic study has been done.

Peter Gillespie responded that a traffic study has been done, as well as a drainage calculations and other supporting documentation is located in the Engineering Department.

Councilor Drake asked what the Porter & Chester building was sold for.

Peter Gillespie responded that it went for approximately \$400,000.

Councilor Drake asked how that amount compared to the assessed value.

Peter Gillespie responded that the assessed value was higher.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

George Ruhe, 936 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the settled budget, which is now behind everyone and noted that he was most concerned and disappointed that the Board's budget was not brought down to zero or below. He would have preferred an increase with the capitol improvements on the town's side of the budget.

## COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Roberts noted that the Memorial Day Parade will be held on Saturday, May 28 at 9:00 a.m. starting at the Department of Motor Vehicles Department.

Councilor Hurley reported that the Keane Foundation will be holding a 5K run on Sunday, June 5, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Console commented that people should start calling the School Superintendent starting July 1 on a monthly basis. He noted that he would like to have a monthly financial statement from both the Town and the School side on actual budget figures. Deputy Mayor Console also noted that there is a Bill on the Senate floor, #1167, which is a Bill requiring the Office of Policy and Management to decide how the trash energy plant should be managed and have as a State asset. If the Bill passes, it will assign it to a government entity. The way it reads, the MDC will be the operator of the plant and oversee the plant, but will not manage the plant. The plant would be managed by a separate entity by the State of Connecticut. He noted that Tab No. 4 states that the CRRA (which the Town is part of) has \$140 million in reserves. Tab No. 6, over the past five years, CRRA has spent over \$23 million in legal fees for different lawsuits. Tab No. 5 noted that 15 employees employed by CRRA. For every one CRRA employee, it's 1 ½ employees that run the plant, so there seems to be some overlap.

Jeff Bridges noted that he had attended the MDC meeting and Senator Fonfara had supported Bill 1167.

Councilor Drake asked if the intentions of the Bill were to get CRRA to give the facility back to MDC.

Jeff Bridges responded that Senator Fonfara stated that the intention was to provide a mechanism whereby the towns who have paid for the CRRA facility have a greater impact on the operation.

Councilor Manousos noted that Inlands Wetlands Commission is having some issues of getting a quorum at their meetings, and Flood & Erosion never meets, so he asked if Jeff Bridges could look into disbanding Flood & Erosion, and take those existing members and move them to Inland Wetlands. There is also a similar situation with Culture & Arts.

Dolores Sassano noted that there is one person on Culture & Arts now. It was responsible for a large town wide event every 3 years. A festival of food, art, native dress, music and dance. As more groups came forward presenting events such as Wethersfield Weekend, there was less of a need for the large committee. Councilor Manousos asked if this Committee was needed.

Dolores Sassano responded that the Town Council would have to make that decision.

Chairperson Hemmann reported that everyone had received a notice in their envelope from the Wethersfield Beautification Trust, with a number of different projects. Council has also received an invitation from CRCOG for a luncheon on Thursday, June 9. She noted that she had received a notice from Chairperson Raul Rodriguez in regards to the contingency balance from this year's budget and asked if Jeff Bridges could look into that so it can be placed on the next agenda.

#### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges reported on the Cedar Mountain Project and noted that there is a meeting with the Conservation Commission in Newington at 7:00 p.m. on May 17.

Councilor Roberts asked if this was the same time as Wethersfield's Planning & Zoning meeting.

Jeff Bridges responded that it was.

#### COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Drake moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF LAURA NASH FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS,"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-1.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED CONTRACT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD AND AFSCME LOCAL 818, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2011 TO JUNE 30, 2014,"** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Union has agreed to the contract as reviewed by Town Council.

Councilor McAlister commented that it would be interesting to have a one page summary of the financial impact from the budget for future Council to review. He asked how many people are in this union.

Jeff Bridges responded that there are 30 plus people in the union.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that there was an addendum in Council's packet regarding CREC and the proposed magnet school.

Councilor Montinieri asked if there was any feedback from the School Board regarding this

issue.

Chairperson Hemmann responded that a representative from CREC was at the meeting tonight.

Don Walsh, from CREC reported that he was part of the presentation team last week that had met with the Board. He reported that the meeting went well and felt a good impression was made to the Board.

Chairperson Hemmann asked if the Board's consensus was favorable towards CREC's presentation.

Don Walsh responded that he hesitated to characterize anything. He noted that a vote wasn't taken, but felt by the Board's reaction, that it was favorable.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if there have been any changes or modifications to the remaining six acres on the west side of the building since the last meeting.

Don Walsh responded that he was not aware of any additional changes. He stated that there are two parcels of land owned by Northeast Utilities, a three acres piece and a six acre piece. If this deal goes forward, CREC would acquire the three acre piece, and including the ten acres that are being bought, that will be the finished magnet school site. The understanding from the owners of the property, Northeast Utilities, is that they are entertaining a gift of the six acre parcel of land to the Town and CREC has not been directly involved with this.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if the six acre parcel of land was commercially zoned for business use.

John Bradley, of Rome McGuigan, counsel for CREC, commented that CREC is proposing to buy the existing Northeast Utilities property along with three acres along Wolcott Hill Road, for a total of approximately 13 acres. CREC is proposing to build a pre-K-5 magnet school. CREC has its funding, approximately \$30 million in place, approximately 90 teaching positions, 5-10 staff positions, and proposing a complete renovation and re-use of that property.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if the next step would involve Planning & Zoning.

John Bradley responded that CREC would like to receive the encouragement and support of the

Town Council and also whether the Town Council is opposed to this idea. CREC is obligated to build seven magnet schools, four of which are under construction, with three additional buildings about to be built. He noted also that CREC feels it is a win/win situation for Wethersfield and for CREC.

Councilor Manousos asked if that is the option on the six acres would be assigned to the Town,

part of the transaction would also involve an upfront payment to the Town.”

John Bradley responded that this is what has been publicly stated. CREC is trying to buy the property from the current owner, but the current owner is stating that they will make a one-time \$2 million payment in lieu of taxes to the Town of Wethersfield, which by estimates they will have given approximately 20 years worth of taxes, but this is something that the owners are trying to do. CREC is only trying to purchase the property.

Councilor Manousos asked that in addition to that sum of money, the option for the six acres would be assigned to the Town, and the Town would have use of the building and the improvements made by CREC.

John Bradley noted that CREC has offered that the building would be available for use by the Town of Wethersfield, in addition to the meeting rooms, the fields, and would offer in service training programs to Wethersfield schools, and would also like to cooperate in any way possible with the Town of Wethersfield.

Don Walsh commented that CREC would like to see the building as an amenity to the Town, within reason. The school is not in session at night and CREC would like the building to be available, inside and out, to the Town.

Councilor Manousos noted that the plans included a gymnasium and asked if that would also be available to the Town.

Don Walsh responded that the fitness areas would be available to the Town.

Councilor Manousos asked if the front of the building would have some potential use for the Town, and what the intentions would be for the school.

Don Walsh responded that there are three pieces to the property: a warehouse that CREC feels should come down; a main building that is approximately 80,000 square feet which CREC intends to create interior space of approximately 65,000 feet; and no decision has been made as to what they are going to do with that building. CREC doesn't want the Town to think that the building is going to be renovated for use by the Town because the State Department of Education would not allow the construction grant, which is \$32 million, to be used for that purpose.

Councilor Drake wanted to clarify the Council does not have a lot of say in this decision.

Councilor Manousos agreed with Councilor Drake that he felt this was a good investment and would be the time to put money aside to offset some of the taxes.

Councilor McAlister noted that he endorsed this project.

Councilor Hurley gave his endorsement for the project also and noted that it would be nice to hear what the Board of Education's thoughts were.

Councilor Roberts commented that the work that CREC does is very good and provides a service to many students in many towns. She noted that she had a concern in that a huge parcel would be taken off the tax roll forever, and whatever Wethersfield students go to the CREC School, the Town has to pay additional costs for the students to attend the CREC school.

Don Walsh responded that people can disagree with the owner's offer to the Town, and with Councilor Roberts second concern, he explained that the way in which the magnet program works, it is a state run lottery, and what is important to know is that if the school is not put in Wethersfield, it will be put nearby in either Newington or Rocky Hill or possibly in the South End of Hartford. And by State law, those same Wethersfield children will go to those schools and the Town will have to pay that bill.

Councilor Roberts responded that she understood what he was saying, but she still had her concerns.

Councilor Manousos commented that on previous discussions about the additional cost and reference was made that it could be a net positive for the Town as far as what would be received in State aid as opposed to the additional cost, and asked Don Walsh to review this.

Don Walsh responded that CREC has tried not to create any illusions about magnet school participation and cost in savings and he noted that the point CREC is trying to make is when there is a critical mass from a particular grade in a particular school, then you get into saving the cost of a teacher. The Town does receive Education Cost Sharing payments per child of approximately \$2,032/year per child. The tuition for this magnet school will be \$3,700 and the average magnet school tuition is \$3,800.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that she supports the concept of the magnet school.

Deputy Mayor Console inquired as to whether there had been any additional discussions regarding public safety as Wethersfield would be responsible for Fire and Police.

John Bradley responded that CREC is responsible for its own public safety within the school and at Planning & Zoning CREC will deal with what's the right entranceway for the traffic.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that with a student body of 450, there may be a need for increased police presence. He noted that he is in agreement with the CREC school idea.

Councilor Roberts commented that perhaps there should be a consensus from the Council to bring out what everyone is thinking.



Chairperson Hemmann responded that she would like to look for a consensus if people are willing to see this matter move forward.

Councilor Roberts reiterated her concerns in that a huge parcel would be taken off the tax roll forever, and the Town has to pay additional costs for any of the Wethersfield students who may attend the CREC School.

Jeff Bridges noted that what he is hearing is that the majority of the Town Council supports the idea of the re-use of the CL&P property for a CREC magnet school pre-K-5 with the understanding that a one-time payment in lieu of tax of \$2 million would be remitted to the Town, and that the six acre parcel, the subject of discussion tonight, at least the option, and preferably the parcel, will be given to the Town. He noted this is what he heard, and asked if this was the understanding of Council.

Chairperson Hemmann asked if Councilors agree.

Councilor Montinieri noted that there should be something from the Board, going back to Mike's point, about their position on it, to at least coincide with the sentiment of the Council so that we are not going off track with whatever they want.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that they should be able to call Raul.

Councilor Montinieri responded that it should be able to be done informally.

Councilor Roberts asked if the record could reflect that "the majority of Council" because she doesn't support it.

Councilor Hemmann commented that this is fair. She asked if this needs to be put on the next agenda. She noted that she would give Chairperson Rodriguez a call and get some information from that regard, and pass that information along.

Councilor Manousos asked what would be the nature of the transmission from the Board be.

Chairperson Hemmann responded that it would be whether there was a consensus, were they in favor of having CREC come to Town.

Councilor Drake asked how often has the Board ask the Council for its opinion.

Chairperson Hemmann responded that they have not.

Councilor Drake commented that he doesn't understand why Council would do it. Council has just talked with the Board, and what Council's opinion is doesn't mean anything but an opinion. He noted that he doesn't want the Board's opinion and the Board obviously hasn't asked for

Council's opinion. He noted that the Board had been invited to the joint meeting and did not seem too interested in one way or the other. He noted that he thinks council is fine the way they are. He also commented to end it tonight and let it go forward.

Councilor Montinieri asked if Jeff Bridges' point was that he would be sharing with Planning & Zoning the sentiment of the Council, and asked if that is the outcome, the goal.

Chairperson Hemmann commented that they could certainly pass their consensus.

Jeff Bridges added with those conditions met.

Deputy Mayor Console agreed.

Chairperson Hemmann also agreed.

Jeff Bridges added in some form of letter, agreement, contract.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that she will still pass on the information to Chairperson Rodriguez.

### BIDS

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO PURCHASE POOL WATER TREATMENT CHEMICALS THROUGH THE CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BID #59 FROM H. KREVIT & CO., LESLIES POOLMART, AND SAVOL IN THE QUANTITIES AND COST AS NOTED IN THE ATTACHED LIST"** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported that this is the Town's annual purchase of pool chemicals for the two Town pools.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor McAlister moved **"TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR ELDERLY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO CURTIN TRANSPORTATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$186,150 FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JULY 1, 2011 AND IN ACCORDNACE WITH ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS,"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that staff rebid the Dial-A-Ride service and Assistant Town Manager and Director Nancy Stilwell recommended that the bid be accepted.

Nancy Stilwell reported that two viable bids were received and both vendors were interviewed because of the discrepancy in the bid amount. She reported that Curtin Transportation is the direct provider while the other vendor is a broker which takes their cut and hires a provider.

Councilor Drake inquired as to how many bids were received.

Nancy Stilwell responded that four bids were received, two of which did not meet the specifications.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if the other vendor, Logistic Care, brokered Curtin Transportation.

Nancy Stilwell responded that they did not.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE SUPPLIES, AS NEEDED, TO SUBURBAN STATIONERS AND W.B. MASON CO., INC.,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that after reviewing available pricing for similar products, the pricing in this bid was similar, if not remained.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

#### MINUTES

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2011”** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor McAlister ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Behn Sikora, 35 State Street, commented that he attended the Board of Education meeting last week in which the CREC issue was discussed and mentioned that his son presently attends the Soundbridge School in Wethersfield and have been very pleased with the school. His son has been selected as one of the ten students from Wethersfield to attend the Discovery Academy. He expressed his excitement in the opportunity of having a CREC school in Wethersfield.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented that the CREC issue seems like an interesting proposal. He suggested that everyone watch the Board of Education meeting when this was presented to them. He noted that he found it interesting that the Board of Education wants the \$2 million and does not want the Town to have the money. George Ruhe also commented that as a World War II Veteran, Memorial Day is not a day to commemorate our entry into World War II. Memorial Day is a somber day in memory of the young men who gave their all and died. He senses that the memory of those men who died almost comes across as an afterthought. He noted that he doesn't feel that is the intent, but what he hears and sees suggests that.

David Caruk, 149 Broad Street, commented that he spoke at CREC's presentation to the Board of Education and noted that questions were brought up at that meeting that were not brought up at tonight's meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:15 p.m., Councilor Manousos moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk  
*Approved by vote of Council*  
*June 20, 2011*